10: d'Orleans--268 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 609, 727, 177.72 Siam
636.72

"At first they refuse to let us have any provisions, and as we are now without food I am reduced to extreme measures. The villagers assert that they have neither fowls nor eggs in the place.

'If you do not rear poultry,' I reply, 'we may consider that all we find are wild birds,' and I tell the interpreter to open a hen-house and take out two chickens, offering fifteen pence for them, which is, of course, accepted. When the owners have once examined the coins, sounded them and found them good, they regain confidence and bring us some eggs. Their distrust arises from the proceedings of the Siamese soldiers, who, as they travel, requisition everything they require without any payment; the villagers thought that we might do the same, but now they realize that we are honest people."

"As soon as they have established themselves anywhere, the Siamese at once endeavour to combat rival influences, winning over allies underhand and terrorizing those who, seeing no other chance of succour, are compelled to accept their friendship. In 1872 they entered upon the district of Traninh and depopulated part of it, while from Luang Prabang they sent agents on to our territory in the region of [295] Son La. They also took natives who were under our protection from Song Ma and made them march thirty days to drink in secret 'the water of the oath' at a pagoda outside the town, and they are now eager to seize the rich table-lands of the Ponôn. Thus in 1891 ten Annamite chiefs who had been sent into this region by the French Resident at Vinh, with interpreters in our service, were, against the faith of treaties, arrested and sent to Bangkok by order of the Siamese colonel commanding at Luang Prabang, the interpreters beaten, and our flag torn to rags. Only a few days ago an officer put up a proclamation in the town threatening with death all friends of the French, and, in order to obtain reparation for this insult M. Massie was obliged to make a personal business of it and talk of calling the colonel out. So much for the influence possessed by our agents!

The young chiefs, powerless to maintain their autonomy, prefer making a complete surrender to their new masters; and I recently learned that the king had sent for Thais from Theng, that is to say our subjects, who had been transported to the confines of Luang Prabang, and had promised to pay them for cultivating the soil, if they would

undertake not to quit his kingdom; because Siam may succeed in extending its power and spoliating its neighbours, we must not conclude that it is in good odour with its neighbours--very much the contrary."

73: Hammer--240 S-4 (no date) 1951 Laotians
116, 642, 648, 727, 177.64 France
636.64

"In Laos, as in Vietnam, the Chinese occupation had provided a protective screen behind which a nationalist regime had consolidated itself in power. A Free Laotian movement forced the abdication of King Sisavong Vong, set up its own more representative government, and then brought him back to the throne as the constitutional leader of an independent country. Only after the Chinese withdrew could the French return to Laos, and the Chinese troops were in no haste to leave. China did not withdraw the last of its troops from Indochina until midsummer of 1946. The French promised Laos, as they had Cambodia, to restore the areas taken by Thailand in 1941; (8) and in both countries they

8. On November 17, 1946 the French signed an agreement to this effect with Thailand in regard to both Laotian and Cambodian territory.

played upon the fear of Vietnamese and Thai aggression. On August 27, 1946 they signed an agreement with Laos (recognizing the union of the country under Sisavong Vong, formerly king only of Luang Prabang) much like that with Cambodia, by which they restored the prewar protectorate in modifiedbut not radically changed form."

726 of his army, the survivors of which crossed the river by swimming.
643*
175* /67/ The "restoration." -- Victory of Pak Phoun. He halted at Xieng-Khane (1). In the general confusion his second son Thène-

1. To the south of Luang-Prabang, on the right bank of the Mekong, today in Siamese territory.

Kham, a worthy descendant of Fa-Ngoun, did not lose his head. He hastily regrouped the fugitives, armed the inhabitants of the region, reformed a nearly homogeneous army as well as could be expected and, since he knew that the Annamites had been greatly weakened by a dearly bought victory, set out boldly to meet them. The Laotians fought with the strength of despair and defeated the invaders at Pak-Phoun. Exploiting this success, Thène-Kham went in hot pursuit and forced them to recross the Mékong in full disorder at the level of Pak-Nane. Lan-Xang was saved. The generalissimo Phoua-Khouang-Soun had to evacuate Tran-Ninh and died in Annamite territory--it is said that he was struck by lightning in the course of a violent storm.

But these grave events had broken the physical resistance of King Tiakaphat, who died at Xieng-Khane at the age of sixty-five, "the third day of the crescent moon of the fifth month" of year 841 (1479 A.D.) (2), leaving fourteen /68/ legitimate children of which eight

/805/ 2. The Laotian year is lunar, beginning towards the middle of April. Every three years an extra month is inserted which doubles the eighth month. The numbering of the years is based on a great cycle of sixty years and on two others of ten and eight years. The Laotian era began in 638 A.D. In 1900 it entered the second year of its 22nd cycle and it was then year 1262 (Pi-Xuet-Tho-Sok). Year 841 in which King Tiakaphat died therefore corresponds to 638 + 841 = 1479 of the Christian era.

were ons and six daughters.

THÈNE-KHAM (SOUVANNA-BAN-LANG) (1445), KING 1479-1486.

727 Thène-Kham had actually held the power ever since the death
643* of his elder brother, and the situation was therefore unchanged when
175* he mounted the throne in 1479.

His first concern was with repairing the disasters of the in- 727
vasion, which were immense. The capital had been sacked and 643*
the people had fled into the forests. The fruits of a long century 175*
of peace had been almost completely destroyed, and everything had to be begun anew. For their part, the Annamites had suffered irreparable losses. The chronicles of Auguste Pavie say that when the king of Annam learned of the results of the expedition he "had a great grief because all those who had set out for the war (and /69/ had not come back) were the leaders and best people in the country." He deeply regretted having disobeyed the orders of their common ancestor Khoun-Borom (1) and forbade that in the future

1. Legend here agrees with certain philologists in attributing 197
Thaï origins to the Annamite race. (Cf. above, p. 23, note 1.)

"war should be waged against brothers."

This commentary is Laotian, and it cannot be shown that the 727
Annamites judged the adventure in so highly philosophic a manner. 175*
Whatever the case, this bloody struggle did not have any after-effects. It left no rancor in the heart of the fundamentally peaceful and carefree people of Lan-Xang, who were only too happy to have escaped a mortal danger and to be able to resume their nonchalant life singing. The court itself, shaken by intrigues and passions which were unknown to the common people, never had any idea of reprisals and resumed relations which rapidly became excellent again with the court of Annam.

What is more, the solid armature of the kingdom forged by the great princes of the preceding century hastened the recovery of the country, which had partly regained its former prosperity and its /70/ preeminent position among the Thaï principalities when King Thène-Kham died prematurely in his palace of Xieng-Thong in 1486.

LA-SÈNE-THAÏ (1463), KING 1486-1496.

His brother La-Sène-Thaï succeeded him and devoted the ten 643*
years of his reign to perfecting the work undertaken both at home 648*
and abroad. He particularly strengthened the ties of family and 175*
friendship which bound him to the king of Ayuthya and furthered trade exchanges between his subjects and their cousins on the Ménam (transit points were settled by common agreement for trading

the battle."

Anou was then at Mahassay visiting one of his sons who was governor of the province, and he placed his last hope in the aid promised by the emperor of Annam. He waited for more than a year, but the Siamese finally discovered his retreat, ravaged Camon which they emptied of its inhabitants, and almost captured Anou himself. He had just time enough to cross the Annamitic Chain at the ridge of Hatrai and to take refuge in Hue.

Anou with the emperor of Annam (1828). The emperor Minh-Mang was somewhat embarrassed by the unexpected arrival of his vassal in his own palace. Gia-Long's son was at that time greatly preoccupied by a revolt which was being fomented in Cochinchina (1)

1. It was to break out in 1832 under the command of Le-Van-Khoi upon the death of Marshal Le-Van-Duyet, the comrade of Gia-Long in his struggle and a great friend of the French, whose tomb Minh-Mang had profaned.

and was not anxious to enter into an open struggle with Bangkok. He had just received a letter from the king of Siam, who was not unaware of the troubled situation in the southern provinces and who had expressed himself as follows: "We have successfully /173/ terminated a war against Vientiane. If Your Majesty were to form the resolve of sustaining Chao-Anou, we should be under a necessity of invading your states and dealing with you. We would further point out that the king of Vientiane, our tributary in the same right as that of Annam, refused obedience to us and declared war on us first."

The last attempt at resistance. Minh-Mang nonetheless welcomed the fugitive with apparent warmth and placed ten thousand men at his disposition.

Anou took the route which Ong-Hue had once followed through Vinh, the valley of the Song-Ca, Cua-Rao, Thado and Xieng-Khouang, but this army had received its orders so well that the greater part thereof abandoned him along the way on various pretexts.

Destruction of Vientiane. Having drained his full cup of bitterness, Anou reached the walls of Vientiane to find only smoking

727 ruins, for the city had been given over to fire and bloodshed. The
175* Siamese had deported six thousand families to the right bank of the Mekong, had taken all the elephants and removed four hundred warhorses. They had not, however, been able to lay hands on /174/ the royal treasures, which had been carefully hidden. Phia-Bodin had then left for Bangkok leaving matters in the hands of Phia-Papha and driving towards the Menam terrified throngs of men, women and children who were followed by long files of carts filled with plunder and statues taken from the overturned temples (1).

1. Including the Prabang, carried off for the second time.

645 Since Phia-Papha had only a small force at his disposal, he left
175* Vientiane, crossed the river, dispatched a messenger to his master and settled in Thabo to await the turn of events.

721 Battle of Makheng. According to a Siamese version, the Annamite
175* "commissioners" accompanying Anou interceded in his behalf and obtained his pardon. In this version, the king of Vientiane was given permission to settle in the city again, but then had all the Siamese who were there massacred by surprise, immediately sent out his troops in pursuit of Phia-Papha and was again defeated in the vicinity of Makheng (2).

2. Cf. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit. /Repression de la revolte de Vientiane, Bangkok, 1926./

726 In the meantime the king of Siam, at the news of the rebel's re-
643* turn, had sent out a new army 20,000 men strong which reached
175* /175/ the banks of the river in forced marches. Then Anou realized that struggle was impossible, and so as not to bring down further misfortunes on his subjects he resolved to go to China. He left by the valley of the Nam-Song with only one of his wives and 120 devoted partisans (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./

645* Chao-Noi delivers up Anou (1831). The Siamese general sus-
175* pected that he had made his way towards Tran-Ninh and sent orders

to Chao-Noi to deliver the fugitive up to him as soon as he entered 648*
Chao-Noi's States. 175*

The only alternative was an unpleasant one for the king of Xieng-Khouang, who doubtless regretted, although somewhat tardily, that he had not given more support to his neighbor when there was perhaps still time. To give Anou up would be to expose himself to reprisals from their common suzerain the emperor of Annam, while to conceal his presence in his domain was surely to draw down the immediate wrath of Siam.

Captivity and death of Anou (1831-1835). Losing his head, he 727
met the most immediate threat by arresting Anou and holding him 643*
prisoner in /176/ Muong-Soui until the arrival of the Siamese en- 175*
voy, a Lu chieftain named Chao-Nan (1). The vanquished king

1. Up until the end of the eighteenth century the Lus formed /563/
an important group in the kingdom of Xieng-Khieng. Their /636/
chieftain, the Chao-Fa, who was then a tributary of Burma, had his residence at Muong-Sing. After Phia-Tak's victories over the Burmese, certain Lu families served the Siamese while others dispersed in the mountains of Luang-Prabang and Xieng-Mai and the Chao-Fa settled in Muong-You to remain under the protection of the king of Burma. See below, Chapter VIII, p. 331 (question of the Sip-Song-Panas), and 355.

was put in golden chains and sent on a richly caparisoned elephant to Bangkok, where he found a luxurious prison which had been prepared to receive him (1831). He remained there for four years and died in circumstances which have remained mysterious (2).

2. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./ Some accounts claim that he poisoned himself. Mgr. Pallegoix relates that he was placed in an iron cage and exposed to the insults of the populace, and that he succumbed to the bad treatment which he had to endure.

Destruction of the kingdom of Vientiane. Siam made an ordi- 727
nary Siamese province out of the old kingdom of Vientiane, a kind 175*
of military frontier land which it called "Lao Phoueun." It would /642/

727 be true to say that Phia-Bodin's soldiers left only "the land, the
175* water and the wild beasts of the forest." In accomplishing this
/642/ methodical devastation the Siamese had /177/ pursued a double goal: to repopulate their own territories which the Burmese had razed in the same way fifty years before, and to make sure that Annam would have no interest, in the future, in a region which had been emptied of its inhabitants (1). They completed the organiza-

1. Only a few remote muongs bordering on the mountains of Annam were spared, and their governors hastened to ask protection from the powerful neighboring emperor.

tion of their conquest by creating the hereditary fief of Bassac in the south and offering it to Chao-Houy as a reward for his treachery (2).

2. Chao-Houy reigned for thirteen years and died in 1840 at the age of sixty-three. (Annals of Bassac.)

648* The end of Chao-Noi (1832). Several of Anou's sons, however,
175* (whose names have come down to us: Chao-Phoui, Chao-Xang, Chao-Khi, Chao-Men and Chao-Nou) had been able to reach Hue where they had denounced Chao-Noi's conduct to Minh-Mang. The latter at once summoned the king of Xieng-Khouang to his court.

Chao-Noi realized that the painful hour of explanations had come. This made him all the more anxious to seek evasions, and in his place he sent the governor of Muong-Sen to whom he entrusted rich gifts in the hope of cozening his suzerain. All in vain. The emperor was furious. /178/ He had the delegate thrown into prison and sent a detachment of 1200 men under the command of a general to find Chao-Noi himself. The prince of Tran-Ninh had to resign himself to his departure with all his family, and he appeared before Minh-Mang who brought him to task most severely:

"How could you forget that King Anou was my vassal, and why did you give him up to Siam?"

Chao-Noi knew that his case had been judged in advance and that he was not risking anything, so he did not disguise his thoughts but replied rather insolently:

"I did not deliver up Chao-Anou. The Siamese army pursued him and took him prisoner. You are not ignorant of the fact that the king of Siam threatened anyone who should give support to Vientiane with his vengeance, and you yourself did not aid him.

Anou's old capital without difficulty and fortified themselves there, 726
completing the destruction of its ruins in their search for the royal 175*
treasures (1), and from there sent rapid incursions into the present- 563

1. They tore down the central minaret of the That-Luong.

day muong of Borikhane.

The governor of Nongkhay, blackaded in his city which was 648*
thronged with fugitives, joined his cries of alarm to the appeal 726
which the king of Luang-Prabang had sent to Bangkok, and the 175*
Siamese government dispatched an army which first succeeded in 563
driving the Hos northward and then launched a flank attack on them by detaching eight hundred men and sending them to reinforce the forces which King Oun-Kham had mobilized. But the campaign which had been so forcefully begun soon softened in the face of the pirates' counterthrusts, /245/ for the latter had shut themselves into nearly impregnable fortresses. Pressed to make an end of it and to save face, the Siamese leaders came to terms with them and gave them permission to remain in the land in return for vague recognition of the suzerainty of Bangkok. As for the surviving inhabitants of the circumscriptions which had been purged of Hos, /727/
they were "severely blamed for having fled before the enemy" and driven along the Mekong with their flocks. "10,600, men, women and children departed. The exodus of these poor folk across this land of famine was a pitiful spectacle. Most of them died along the way, and a few were able to flee. Only six thousand reached Siam" (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./

Luang-Prabang had been miraculously spared, but anarchy of 579
the utmost violence was unleased at the very gates of the princi- 563
pality. The "Yellow Flags" invaded the Sip-Song-Chau-Thai, 727
whose leader Cam-Sinh had joined forces with the "Black Flags" 175*
of Ong-Lin (2), while the Meos and the Khas stirred up trouble in

2. Luu-Vinh-Phuoc, encamped at Lao-Kay.

their turn -- seemingly at first merely in self-defense against the Hos, then as a means of existence in the general confusion -- by

579 ravaging the region of Dien-Bien-/246/ Phu as far as Muong-Ngoi.
563 King Oun-Kham was growing old and carefree and felt incapable,
727 when left entirely to his own resources, of calming the mortal dis-
175* quietude of his people. Thus Siamese agents, the number of whom
/648/* was constantly on the increase, were welcomed all along the Upper Mekong as the only protectors from whom effective aid could be expected.

636 Relations with the cantons of the Black River. The man Cam-
175* Sinh, who was of Chinese origin himself, was nevertheless a friend of the princes of Luang-Prabang, but he was then too preoccupied with driving the invaders out of his own domains to lend any support to his neighbor.

His remote ancestors were military mandarins in Quang-Si and had settled three hundred years previously in Muong-Lai, which they had pacified in behalf of the king of Anna. Their authority extended around Lai-Chau as far as Yunnan in the north and Muong Theng in the south (Dien-Bien-Phu, the legendary cradle of the Laotian race). At this time they had reached a peaceful agreement
/728/ with the kings of Lan-Xang, most likely Nokeo-Koumane or Thammi-Karath who had just /247/ shaken off the Burmese yoke (1) and who

1. See above, pp. 97 and 100.

were glad to give them charge of the "white" and "black" Thais of the region in exchange for a triennial payment of thirty-three taels of silver "and one horse" (2). Relations had subsequently become

2. Cf. the Chronicle of Muong-Lai given by Deo-van-Tri to Auguste Pavie in 1894.

completely friendly and trusting to such a degree that when Cam-Sinh was in conflict with several of his relatives around 1850 he had not hesitated to place two of his children, one of whom was Deo-van-Tri, in Souka-Seum's hands (3).

3. See above, p. 213, note.

669 Revolt of the Khas of Muong-Ngoi (1876). It was not until 1876,
175* after he had temporarily driven back the Yellow Flags, that he was
563 able to send any reinforcements to Oun-Kham to sustain the struggle

648* 175* A few weeks later his eldest son Kham-Souk was given permission to return to his own land and left with a small armed force led by Louang Datzakorn, which preceded the Phya Surrissak's new army as an advance guard.

At the end of November Pavie was back in Luang-Prabang, and while he awaited news of the advance of the Pernot column which had left Lao-kay in the direction of Lai and Theng he settled temporarily with the Satou of the Wat-Mai. There he effortlessly resumed his close relations with the "good inhabitants" who all knew him and showed "so clearly that they thought him at home in the bonzery that one might have thought he had been living there for 727 years." The "enchanting city" was born again out of its ashes, en- 369 tirely new houses arouse out of the debris, the market took shape again and the girls who sold their wares there came back /274/ each day in greater numbers -- Laotian and Lu women from the country, timid Kha women from the nearby forest and girls from Luang-Prabang whom Pavie could identify by "the ease of their gestures and attitude, by their greater flexibility and distinction, by their sweet and familiar civility and by their coquettishness with its ingenuous charm." This "lovable people" began to live again in the aftermath of its misfortune with a rare carefreeness, as if it were unconscious of the present's uncertainties and in spite of the future's threats. "And each evening, by the light of the stars, troops of decisive young women and turbulent and laughing girls assembled in various spots and followed the khene players, singing until dawn..."

648* 175* Although capable of appreciating all the poetry of this carefree revival, Pavie was nonetheless anxious to set out and at long last make contact with the cantons of the highlands. He soon grew impatient at not receiving any precise information concerning the advance of the columns, of which he knew only that Colonel Pernot's forces had been concentrated in Phong-Tho and that the Oudri detachment had set out in the direction of Son-La. Moreover, the unusual length of time which Bangkok was taking to send him the three promised "commissioners" rightly made him suspect secret maneuvers on the part /275/ of the Siamese agents who had remained in the Twelve Cantons after the withdrawal of the Chao-Meun's expeditionary force.

648* edition), Paris, 1911./, p. 9.
175*
654 the name French Syndicate of Upper Laos, which placed a first ship-
/439/ ment of fifteen tons of merchandise at the expedition's disposal.

Pavie set sail again on November 17 for /293/ Bangkok, where he stayed for only two weeks, just long enough to make contact again with our representative in Siam and to reopen negotiations with the Siamese foreign minister, who was specially appointed for the purpose by King Chulalongkorn.

On January 23, 1890 he reached Hanoi and rejoined his old and his new companions (including, among the latter, the embassy attache Lefevre-Pontalis, the vice-consul Lugan, the trader Macey, Professor Courillon, the Postal Commissioner de Coulgeans, the naturalist Le Dantec and the officers Riviere, Friquegnon, de Malglaive, Dugast and Cogniard). He divided them into several groups of operators who scattered on February 3 throughout Tran-Ninh, Cammon and the region of Stung-Treng, while he himself set out for Luang-Prabang with a last group of "fervent disciples," where he arranged to meet all the members of the mission six months later so that they could coordinate their first labors over the winter months.

Duly provided, through the intermediary of Governor General Piquet, with the authority of the king of Cambodia and that of the emperor of Annam for settling questions of frontier delimitation, and with a passport from the Chinese government /294/ which would eventually allow him to explore the Yunnanese frontiers, he first
/624/ went to Muong-Lai where Deo-van-Tri was waiting for him. Faithful to his promise, now that all his brothers had all been freed Cam-Sinh's son awaited his arrival so that he could offer himself to the French authorities, "placing all his pride in giving himself up to that man who had restored calm to his land" (1).

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, "Geographie et Voyages," Vol. II, p. 12.

Pavie had an enchanted voyage. Although the magnificent valley of the Black River no longer held for him the powerful attraction of the unknown, still he felt a profound joy as he daily noted the changes for the better which had occurred since his last trip among
/727/ these peoples. "The influence of Pennequin (who had accompanied
/178/ him with Vacle and Lefevre-Pontalis) was there, clearly marked at each step... no more Flags in the well-known colors, all had

Colonial 648 175

Such overt acts were the certain prelude to a more complete annexation, and finally shook off our torpor and quickened our vigilance.

Since the king of Annam, our new protégé, had rights over this region which were equal and in several cases superior to those of Siam, our intervention became necessary. It resulted in the treaty of May 7, 1886 (1).

(1) See Appendix VI.

[10] So that the treaty should not remain mere words, the Government of the French Republic sent M. Pavie (1) on a geographical and 175 727 654

(1) Now minister plenipotentiary.

political mission in Upper Laos and named him consul in Luang-Prabang, but without Siam's exequatur.

The work of this first mission provided precious information on all the regions invaded by the Hos and later occupied by the Siamese. With the help of Commander Pennequin (2), our valiant consul

(2) Now brigadier general; former interim governor general of Madagascar.

succeeded in driving the last bandits back to China and made the advance outposts which had been established by the Siamese withdraw to the far limits of the Mékong basin. Turning this situation to their profit, and now strong in the knowledge which they had acquired, our diplomats concluded with the court of Bangkok, so as to be able to face any difficult eventuality in the future, as well as to give us time for reflection, the arrangement of March 27, 1889, by the terms of which Siam agreed to respect the status quo (3).

[648]

(3) "By the terms of this agreement the Siamese troops were to halt their eastward march, and then evacuate the region of Cammon. A Siamese 'Kha-luong' was allowed to remain in this province for the time being, and we obtained the right to construct a military post at Napé." E. Picanon, 1900, Le Laos français.

161 and a few plateaus of small extent which are the only spots suited to
311 farming and, in consequence, suited to settlements by human groups.

The uneven disposition of the country is the first cause of the low population density. It is not the only one.

161 For more than a century the Hôs and the Siamese have taken
175 turns in sacking the country, especially the northern part. Their methods differed, but the final result was the same. The former massacred the inhabitants after burning the villages, and forced those
• 727 who had escaped famine and torture to go and settle in another region. The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical fashion, and
648 depopulated the [125] land by making the inhabitants, livestock and elephants cross over to the right bank of the Mékong and oftentimes then taking them as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Fortunately this state of affairs, which prevailed when we took possession of Laos, is far from being immutable and there is every hope that the causes which gave birth to this forced departure will never again occur. The French occupation has safeguarded the population against the return of the old invasions, and in the same way the equity and justice of our administration make it possible for the natives to count on interior tranquillity and on the products of their labor.

Great efforts have also been made by our consuls in Siam and our administrators in Laos towards repopulating the country, and appreciable results have already been achieved in this direction. Thus by virtue of the agreement appended to the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, two thousand families including a minimum of eight thousand individuals of both sexes and a great deal of livestock who had previously been taken to Siam were able to return and settle on the left bank of the Mékong, the land of their origin.

168 Nothing, moreover, would stand in the way of an appeal to the other parts of Indo-China to repopulate Laos. The deltas, for example, are overflowing with people and their industrious population is so dense that the part of the land which is cultivable is by far too limited for each individual.

By offering these people a few advantages, especially in the beginning, it would be easy to attract them to Laos. By dint of hard work they would doubtless find existence comparatively easy there instead of being reduced, as they are today in certain regions, to a difficult struggle for survival.

Cochinchina, and this is quite a lucrative trade.

231 178 The following are the main points in Laos where the raising of oxen would have a good chance of success, in view of the nature of the soil and the forage plants which grow there:

1. Northern Laos. Valleys of the upper Nam-Tha; plain of Muong-Sing; plains of the Mekong and of the Nam-Hou in the province of Luang-Prabang; valleys of the Nam-Het and of the upper Song-Ca; plains of Tran-Ninh (2); plains between the Mekong, the Nam-Tone

[175 727] (2) Tran-Ninh used to be the greatest livestock region in Laos as recently as thirty some years ago, and all the buffalo and oxen needed in nearby regions came from there. The occupation of the region by the Hos and its pitiless depopulation by the Siamese completely halted this form of industry. It is beginning to be reborn with the peace and order which we have brought to this region, and the herds are reforming. Exports have already begun again in the last year.

Livestock is the principal form of wealth of the region, and could yield high profits to a European company which had sufficient capital at its disposition to engage in large-scale breeding. [113] (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, December 1900. Report of the Superior Resident on Tran-Ninh.)

and the Nam-Ngum, in the province of Vien-Tiane.

[405] 2. Southern Laos. Plain of Tha-Khek and basin of Mahasay, in the province of Cammon; plains of the Mekong, valleys of the Se-Bang-Hien and of its tributaries in the province of Song-Khone; plains between the Se-Set and the Sedone, valley of the Se-Katam, slope of Pou-Pai-Mai, in the province of Saravane; valleys of the Bla (1), of the Poko and of the Ayoun, in the province of

(1) The raising of oxen might be greatly increased here. In all the villages, especially the Catholic villages, I saw superb herds containing animals with every fine point. If breeding is not more extensive here, this is because the prices offered at Ang-Ke are not greatly higher than those at which the animals are sold in the region, since the Khas use large numbers of them to supplant buffaloes in their superstitious ceremonies. [113] (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, December 1899. Notes by the Superior Commandant of Lower Laos on the eastern region of Lower Laos.)